

THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH IDIOMS INTO UZBEK: LINGUOCULTURAL AND SEMANTIC ASPECTS

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Abstract. *Idioms are an important component of language because they express cultural values, collective experience, emotions, and figurative meanings. Translating idiomatic expressions from English into Uzbek presents several challenges due to differences in linguistic structure, cultural associations, and conventional usage. This study examines the semantic and linguocultural characteristics of English idioms and explores the strategies used to translate them into Uzbek. Particular attention is paid to idiomatic equivalence, metaphorical meaning, cultural specificity, and the preservation of stylistic effects. The research aims to identify similarities and differences between English and Uzbek idioms and determine how translators convey their meanings when direct equivalents are unavailable. The findings may contribute to contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and the development of practical recommendations for English–Uzbek translation.*

Keywords: *idioms, phraseology, translation strategies, semantic equivalence, linguocultural analysis, English, Uzbek, figurative meaning, cultural context.*

Introduction

Language reflects not only the grammatical and lexical structure of a particular linguistic system but also the cultural experience of its speakers. Idiomatic expressions are especially significant in this respect because their meanings often cannot be understood by interpreting the individual words separately. They frequently convey figurative meanings associated with historical experience, social relationships, traditions, and shared cultural knowledge.

English contains numerous idioms used in everyday communication, literature, journalism, and academic discourse. Examples include “break the ice,” “spill the beans,” and “once in a blue moon.” Their meanings are not always transparent from their component words, which creates difficulties for language learners and translators.

Uzbek also possesses a rich phraseological system. Expressions such as “kapalagi uchib ketmoq” and “og‘zi qulog‘ida” demonstrate how figurative language conveys emotions and situations through culturally established expressions. Although English and Uzbek idioms may express similar concepts, their lexical composition, imagery, and stylistic functions may differ considerably.

The translation of idioms therefore requires more than replacing individual words.

Translators must identify the intended meaning, examine the context, and select an expression that conveys the same or a sufficiently similar communicative effect in the target language.

The main aim of this research is to investigate the semantic and linguocultural characteristics of English idioms and identify effective strategies for translating them into Uzbek.

1. Semantic characteristics of English idioms

Idioms are relatively fixed expressions whose meanings are conventionalized within a language community. Their meanings may be metaphorical, culturally motivated, or partly predictable from their components.

For example, the English idiom “break the ice” means to reduce initial tension or make people feel more comfortable in a social situation. Its translation into Uzbek should convey this communicative meaning rather than reproduce the image of physically breaking ice.

Similarly, “spill the beans” means to reveal a secret. A translator must recognize the figurative meaning before selecting an appropriate Uzbek expression or explanatory phrase.

These examples demonstrate that semantic analysis is essential for avoiding literal translations that may sound unnatural or fail to communicate the intended message.

2. Linguocultural characteristics of idioms

Idioms often reflect culturally significant objects, natural phenomena, social practices, and traditional beliefs. Their imagery can reveal how speakers of a language conceptualize emotions, relationships, success, failure, and everyday experiences.

A comparative study of English and Uzbek idioms can identify three broad relationships.

First, some idioms have similar meanings and comparable imagery in both languages. Such expressions may allow relatively direct phraseological equivalence.

Second, certain idioms express similar meanings but use different images. In these cases, the translator may replace the source-language idiom with a natural Uzbek expression that performs a similar communicative function.

Third, some idioms are strongly associated with a particular cultural context and have no established Uzbek equivalent. Their translation may require paraphrase, explanation, or a carefully selected contextual expression.

The existence and degree of equivalence must be established through actual linguistic data rather than assumed from superficial similarities.

3. Translation strategies

Several strategies can be used to translate English idioms into Uzbek.

Idiomatic substitution: An English idiom is replaced with an Uzbek idiom that conveys a similar meaning and stylistic effect.

Literal translation: The imagery and lexical components of the original expression are retained when the result is understandable and natural in Uzbek. This strategy may be unsuitable when the idiom is culture-specific.

Paraphrase: The figurative meaning is expressed through a non-idiomatic phrase. This is useful when no appropriate Uzbek idiom exists.

Compensation: A stylistic or expressive effect that cannot be preserved in one place is recreated elsewhere in the translated text, where appropriate.

Contextual adaptation: The translator selects an expression based on the surrounding text, the speaker's intention, the genre, and the intended audience.

The suitability of each strategy depends on semantic accuracy, naturalness, stylistic consistency, and the preservation of culturally significant meaning.

4. Phraseological equivalence in English and Uzbek

Phraseological equivalence can be examined at several levels. Full equivalence involves a close correspondence in meaning and usage. Partial equivalence occurs when two idioms share a central meaning but differ in imagery, connotation, grammatical structure, or usage restrictions.

Zero equivalence refers to cases in which no established idiomatic counterpart can be identified in the target language.

For example, “break the ice” may require an Uzbek expression describing the reduction of social tension rather than a word-for-word translation. “Spill the beans” similarly requires an expression conveying the disclosure of confidential information.

The appropriate Uzbek rendering should be established through dictionaries, authentic usage examples, and contextual analysis. A phrase that appears semantically similar may differ in register or emotional tone and may therefore be inappropriate in a particular context.

A systematic classification of these relationships would make it possible to explain why some idioms can be translated directly while others require substantial linguistic or cultural adaptation.

Research methodology

The study may use comparative, semantic, contextual, and linguocultural analysis. English idioms should be collected from reliable phraseological dictionaries and authentic texts, while their Uzbek counterparts should be verified using Uzbek phraseological dictionaries and examples of actual usage.

The research corpus should be defined according to clear selection criteria, such as idiom frequency, semantic category, genre, or communicative function. Each example can be analyzed according to its literal form, figurative meaning, cultural associations, Uzbek equivalent, and translation strategy.

Quantitative analysis may also be used to determine the distribution of translation strategies within the selected corpus. However, numerical results should be reported only after the data have been collected and analyzed.

The study is expected to produce a comparative classification of selected English and Uzbek idioms, identify patterns of phraseological equivalence, and describe the main difficulties encountered in translation. It may also establish criteria for evaluating semantic accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and stylistic preservation.

The potential scientific novelty should be demonstrated by comparing the proposed classification and findings with existing studies. A new corpus, a clearly justified set of equivalence criteria, or a systematic analysis of an underexplored group of idioms may provide a basis for an original contribution.

Conclusion

The translation of English idioms into Uzbek is a complex process involving linguistic meaning, cultural knowledge, contextual interpretation, and stylistic judgment. Since idiomatic meaning often extends beyond the literal meanings of individual words, successful translation requires an understanding of the expression as a whole.

A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseology can reveal both shared conceptual patterns and culture-specific differences. It can also clarify when idiomatic substitution, paraphrase, literal translation, or contextual adaptation is most appropriate.

The findings of this research may contribute to translation theory, contrastive linguistics, language teaching, and the practical development of English–Uzbek translation skills.

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